

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CONAKR 00570 211702Z

ACTION AF-04

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 EUR-08 NSC-05 INR-05 CIAE-00

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R 211550Z MAR 78

FM AMEMBASSY CONAKRY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4137

INFO AMEMBASSY FREETOWN

C O N F I D E N T I A L CONAKRY 0570

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PINT, PEPR, GV, SL

SUBJECT: GUINEAN VIEW OF SIERRA LEONE

REF: (A) CONAKRY 0471, (B) FREETOWN 0782

1. TWO RELIABLE GOG SOURCES HAVE PROVIDED SIMILAR ACCOUNTS OF HOW GOG CURRENTLY VIEWS SIERRA LEONE'S INTERNAL POLITICS. THEY ARE REPORTED FOR WHATEVER THEY MAY BE WORTH IN REVEALING GOG'S PERCEPTION OF NEIGHBORING ELITE. ONE SOURCE WAS GOG PROTOCOL OFFICER CHARGED WITH SETTING UP PRESIDENT TOURE'S ABORTED MARCH 9 TRIP TO FREETOWN.

2. ACCORDING TO SOURCES, GOG IS IN NO HURRY TO RESCHEDULE TOURE'S VISIT. GUINEAN LEADERSHIP BELIEVES THAT SIAKA STEVENS IS SLIPPING, MISHANDLING HIS INTERNAL SITUATION, AND MAY BE VULNERABLE TO "OPPOSITION" WITHIN RULING CIRCLES. ONE SOURCE SENSED THAT STEVENS' OPPONENTS WERE NOT EAGER TO SEE HIM BOLSTERED BY FANFARE OF TOURE'S VISIT AND, DURING PRELIMINARY PROTOCOL PLANNING, SOUGHT TO LIMIT OR DIVERT IT FROM STEVENS' CREDIT. GUINEANS WERE NOT CONVINCED THERE WAS ALL THAT MUCH OF SECURITY THREAT TO TOURE, EVEN AFTER
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PAGE 02 CONAKR 00570 211702Z

FOOTBALL INCIDENT, AND TOURE WOULD HAVE GONE AHEAD WITH VISIT HAD NOT GOSL INSISTED ON POSTPONING IT. SOURCES INDICATED THAT ALTHOUGH GOSL VICE-PRESIDENT KOROMA IS "MAGNET" OF ANTI-STEVENS, CIRCLE, GUINEANS WERE STRUCK BY HOW MUCH HE HAS WANED PHYSICALLY SINCE HIS ACCIDENT. RATHER THAN BEING A VIGOROUS CONTENDER, SOURCES THOUGHT HE (WITH ASSOCIATES) WAS BENT ON MERELY ENTRENCHING HIMSELF SUF-

FICIENTLY TO OUTLAST STEVENS OR TAKE OVER IF HE STEPS
DOWN.

3. ONE SOURCE OPINED THAT PROBLEM OF STEVENS'S SHAKINESS
AND INTERNAL OPPOSITION IS PERCEIVED BY GOG LEADERSHIP
AS THREAT TO SIERRA LEONE'S MORE OR LESS MILDLY-PRO-
GRESSIVE" COURSE SINCE 1968. STEVENS IS SOMEONE WHO HAS
BENEFITTED FROM GUINEAN SUPPORT (FOR EXAMPLE, WHEN GUINEA
SENT IN TROOPS AFTER COUP ATTEMPT). STEVENS MAY NOT BE
"TOURE'S MAN" BUT GOG HAS COUNTED ON STEVENS TO MOVE
SIERRA LEONE GRADUALLY IN MORE "PROGRESSIVE" DIRECTION
(SINGLE PARTY BEING ONE MAIN TOOL). HIS INEPTITUDE
HOWEVER RISKS BRINGING A COUNTER-REACTION, AND GUINEA
RISKS "LOSING ALL IT HAS WORKED FOR SINCE 1968" AS WELL
AS HAVING AN UNEASY SITUATION ON BORDER CLOSEST TO
CONAKRY.
MAINLAND

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